
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH BERNIE RICE FOR TEACHER UNIVERSE/DESTINATION READING DEMO
DATE: 8/12/03
CC: RENICK, BOYD

Per your response to my earlier memo, I set up a meeting for Bernie Rice to demonstrate Teacher Universe and Destination Reading for Kameron Ball, MDE's Director of Technology, and me. Overall, we were both greatly impressed. Rice has since provided us with a written proposal and a cost estimate. Rice and his partner, Deborah Upson, have created Best Practice Networks. Their proposal has 2 parts: Teacher Universe and Destination Reading.

Teacher Universe's *Assess Online* measures a teacher's understanding of computer and multimedia operations and applications. It identifies each individual teacher's strengths and learning needs and tailors online professional development to the teacher's specific skill level. Rice's proposal includes the customization of AssessOnline for Mississippi and the availability of the test across the state for all pre-service and in-service teachers. On average, it takes a teacher 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete the assessment. Results are available by district by school and also by school by teacher. Teachers will then be able to take self-paced interactive courses online, via *Integrate Online*, to address their weaknesses and to learn how computers and multimedia technology can be incorporated into the classroom.

Destination Reading, the second component of Rice's proposal, will be piloted in 30 schools across the state. Rice anticipates this impacting 5% of all elementary teachers in the state. Destination Reading is a comprehensive Pre K-3rd grade reading curriculum offered online. Each student receives a password so they can also work at home with their parents. Destination Reading also includes an online professional development program to assist teachers in effectively using the curriculum in the classroom.

The total cost of Rice's proposal is \$2,012,300 (see attached). By major component:

Planning/Implementation/Mgt	\$800,000
AssessOnline	600,000
Online professional development	156,300
Destination Reading in 30 schools	<u>456,000</u>
TOTAL	\$2,012,300

Rice is offering us a FREE perpetual license for Destination Math, a comprehensive Pre K-3rd grade math curriculum, for the 30 schools that implement Destination Reading. His proposal calls for 5 staff members to be placed in Mississippi for project management and training. This staff will also conduct an evaluation of the project that we can utilize for seeking federal funding for expansion of the project.

I'm been thinking about potential funding sources for the \$2 million:

- ARC: I would suggest that we select the 30 schools for Destination Reading based upon reading scores. However, we could select some schools in the ARC region if Mabel had funds to contribute.
- Reading First: NCLB's Reading First grant provides funds to state and local reading programs. Mississippi will receive \$72 million over 6 years for Reading First. Kameron indicated she thought that MDE could use 5% (\$3.6 million) of this for administrative purposes. I know MDE is hosting Reading Academies, but some portion of the \$2 million could possibly come from Reading First.

Rice said to tell you that he is also offering to implement 20 virtual schools throughout the state (possibly via MOLLI – MDE's Mississippi Online Learning Institute) at sites of our choosing. Teachers and students could access up to 1,200 course offerings via each school. He said that he promised you at dinner that he'd do this if we implement Teacher Universe/Destination Reading.

Kameron was blown away by the depth and quality of Teacher Universe and Destination Reading. She was most excited about Teacher Universe's individualized assessment and professional development capabilities. Her statement was "Surely we can find \$2 million somewhere."

This is a perfect fit and next step for the Computers in the Classroom. I think this could probably be sole sourced due to the assessment component. Kameron was not aware of any other software vendor with this capability.

With your approval, I am recommending the following next steps:

1. I check with Mabel as to availability of any funds
2. I determine the amount of administrative funds MDE has for Reading First
3. If sufficient Reading First funds are available, I set up a meeting for Rice to brief MDE management (Dr. John Jordan; Dr. Bonita Potter, Associate Superintendent for Academic Education; and, Robin Miles, Bureau Director for Reading)
4. I check into whether this can be sole sourced.

Please advise as to your approval or as to any other action you want me to take. Thanks.